EVALUATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF STUDENT TEACHING IN AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

BY

BONARD SCOTT WILSON

B.S., University of Illinois, 1940
A.M., University of Illinois, 1946
Ed.M., University of Illinois, 1947

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
IN THE GRADUATE COLLEGE OF THE
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The Problem

The problem was to evaluate the program of student teaching in agricultural education at the University of Tennessee and to improve the program so that it would better meet the needs of future teachers of vocational agriculture in Tennessee. The problem was considered to be a continuous one, not to be solved once and for all time. It was realized that if any educational program is to remain effective, it must be continually evaluated and improved.

The program of student teaching in agricultural education was in need of evaluation and improvement. It had grown as many other programs do. Additions had been made and parts had been discarded as the needs of the student teachers had changed and as new methods of meeting these needs had become available. Time and staff had not been available for a systematic evaluation of the total program. The employment of a full-time supervisor of student teaching in 1947 made it possible to conduct a systematic study for improving the program to better meet the needs of future teachers of vocational agriculture in Tennessee.

Procedures for Solving

It was recognized that the problem of evaluating and improving a program of student teaching can be solved only in the field by persons working with the program and while the program is in operation. Help must be secured from outsiders, also.

It was also recognized that the problem could not be solved in a few years. On the other hand, the study, as a thesis study, must have an end. Consequently, the study was plan-

ned to include an evaluation of the program in operation at the start of the study; the planning, operation and evaluation of the program during 1947 to 1949; and the planning of the program for 1949-50.

The evaluation was made by comparing its program in operation up to and during the 1946-47 school year with a construct of student teaching. The construct used was a statement of the author's beliefs and philosophy concerning requirements and operation of the program of student teaching in agricultural education at the University of Tennessee. The evaluation was in terms of changes needed to make the program compare more favorably with the construct.

Some of these changes were made during the first year of the field study, the school year of 1947-48, and are reported in a description of the program for that year. More of the needed changes were made in the 1948-49 school year and are also reported.

After two years of operation, the construct proved to be faulty in some parts. It was re-studied and revised. The revised construct was used as a guide in planning the program of student teaching for the 1949-50 school year.

It was impossible to include in the 1949-50 program all the changes needed in the future. Also, many questions remain to be answered about student teaching. These questions and further possible changes were listed in order to avoid giving the impression that all things about student teaching were settled and that the 1949-50 program was the never-to-be-changed end-product of the study. Although the study, as a thesis study, ends in 1949, the evaluation and improvement of student teaching in agricultural education at the University of Tennessee will continue as long as such a program exists.

The ideas of others were secured by reading the current literature. All concerned with student teaching in agricultural education at the University of Tennessee were polled

for their opinions. The opinions of recognized leaders in teacher education were sought in the solving of the problem.

Assumptions

Many assumptions were made. Some of these are:

1. The program of student teaching in operation at the beginning of the study was in need of improvement.
2. Student teaching makes a major contribution to the education of future teachers.
3. Student teaching must be built upon a sound program of professional and subject matter courses.
4. Many aspects of the student and his former education affect his student teaching and must be considered as part of the program of student teaching.
5. Student teaching and undergraduate professional courses need to be followed by in-service education of teachers.
6. People learn by doing.
7. Future teachers must be taught as they are expected to teach.
8. A program of student teaching must be consistent with the democratic and Christian principles of our culture.

Uses For The Study

It should be apparent that this study is and will continue to be very valuable to the program of student teaching in agricultural education at the University of Tennessee and to all the people who are concerned with the planning, operation, and evaluation of the program. This study is concerned with an actual program. The conclusions of the study are directly applied as the program for 1949-50.

The study may be of some value to other programs of student teaching in general education and in agricultural

education although the study was primarily intended for one program and not for all programs.

Conclusions

The conclusions of the study are the major points in the revised construct, and the program of student teaching for 1949-50 is the application of these conclusions.

It should be understood that this revised construct is the conclusions of the writer at the end of the study and is not something that is never to be changed. The construct is flexible and must be kept up to date.

It should be further recognized that these conclusions are for student teaching in agricultural education at the University of Tennessee. They are not a universal philosophy of education or even of student teaching. If the conclusions are usuable in their entirety in any other situation, it is concidental.

A. Relationships

Why Relationships Are Important —-Student teaching affects many people and its success depends upon all these people functioning cooperatively for the greatest good to the greatest number. Student teaching is only a part of the total program of teacher education so it must fit properly into it. Student teaching in agricultural education must often conform or try to conform to the widely divergent philosophies held by people in the Colleges of Education and Agriculture.

The establishment of proper working relationships is the beginning step in any educational program. Maintaining these relationships is the oil that keeps the machinery operating without equeaking and breakdowns.

Relationships with Whom — The program of student teaching and the persons responsible for its operation must maintain proper working relations with many other programs and with other people. Relationships must be maintained

with the students in agricultural education, the cooperating teachers, the staff members in agricultural education, the public schools and their administrative officers, the deans of the Colleges of Education and Agriculture, the other supervisors of student teaching the College of Education, and others.

The program of student teaching must be in proper relation to the other professional courses in agricultural education, the courses in technical agriculture, and the general cultural courses. Student teaching must be in proper relation to the program of vocational agriculture and to the total school program in the student teaching centers. Student teaching in agricultural education must be in proper relation to the total program of student teaching in the college of education.

The Method of Relationships — Relationships are based upon certain principles. Some of these that may be considered basic, in the opinion of the writer, are:

1. There must be free exchange of information about all aspects of the program.
2. Communication among all parties concerned must be maintained.
3. The teacher must have the desire to achieve.
4. Identification of common objectives is essential.
5. Plans for procedure should be made cooperatively.
6. All concerned must adhere to the "Golden Rule".

These principles must be followed. There are other principles underlying relationships and perhaps some more basic than the ones listed.

There must be free exchange of information on both sides if relationships are to be successful. All the facts must be known by both sides if all are to work with these facts.

People must be able to communicate their ideas. This is

a part of exchange of information, but it is so important that separate treatment is necesstry. Everyone has to be talking the same language or there is little progress.

Relationships are not successful when some of the people involved do not wish to achieve satisfactory working relations. They are equally unsuccessful if one does not want to achieve, to make progress. There must be a desire on the part of everyone concerned to achieve and to do it in a satisfying manner.

Not only must people want to achieve, but they must want to achieve common objectives if they are to maintain proper working relations. One pulling in one direction and the other in another, like the two mules tied together with a rope, ends up with neither getting anyplace.

After deciding upon common objectives, there must be a common and agreed upon plan of procedure for reaching the objective. It cannot be only one person's plan, but it must be the plan of the group.

The last principle listed would probably include or at least pervade all the other principles. If everyone followed the "golden rule", relationships should be perfect. If everyone did as they would like others to do to them, there would be few problems of relationships. Too often, the practice of doing before the other person gets an opportunity to do us is the rule followed by many.

Educators and the programs they plan and operate must, by example, teach others. If educators cannot solve the problem of their relationships, it is doubtful if the world problems of relationships, or even the problems of two people getting along together will ever be helped by the educators.

B. Local Counsel

Why Local Counsel is Needed — Democratic education demands that the people concerned with the education must have a say in its planning, its operation, and its evaluation.

This is true at the college level just as it is true for other levels in the educational system. Local counsel is needed to plan a program that will fit the needs of the people being served; local counsel is needed to advise on the operation of the program; and local counsel is needed to evaluate the progress of the program.

Who Is to Give Counsel — Counsel should be given by the staff in agricultural education, the cooperating teachers, the student teachers, teachers of vocational agriculture, school administrators, state supervisory staff, faculties of the College of Education and Agriculture, and parents of student teachers.

How to Secure Counsel — Counsel of all these various groups could perhaps be secured best through an organized advisory counsel where all of them were represented. This council should be selected by the supervisor of student teaching and appointed by the Dean of the College of Education. It should meet at regular intervals and advise on matters of planning, operation, and evaluation of the program of student teaching in agricultural education.

C. Determining Needs

Why Needs Should be Determined — Educational programs must be based upon the needs of the people to be served. There is no other sound basis. They are based either upon known needs or assumed needs. Too many mistakes are made when the teacher assumes that he knows the needs of the students. The teacher must determine the educational needs of the people to be educated.

Whose Needs Should be Determined — The needs of rural people in the state, the needs of teachers of vocational agriculture, and the needs of student teachers should be determined. The job of the teacher of vocational agriculture depends largely upon the needs of the rural people of the state. If these needs are known, teacher educators are in a better position to teach their students how to fulfill these needs when

they become teachers of vocational agriculture. The needs of teachers of vocational agriculture must be determined to give more specific direction to the program of teacher education. A student teacher is planning to be a teacher of vocational agriculture, so he must learn to solve the problem of such a person as he does his job in the community. In addition to these needs, the needs that are peculiar to individual students must be taken into consideration in designing the program of student teaching.

When Needs Should be Determined — Needs should be determined as a basis for planning the program of student teaching in agricultural education. The list of needs must be kept current so that changes can be effected in the program to provide means of fulfilling the new needs.

How to Determine Needs — Needs are determined by comparing the present situation with what is thought to be the approachable ideal situation. The difference that is found is the need. If farmers are taking eight months to feed hogs to 200 pounds and they should be taking only six months, the difference indicates a need for some education on the feeding of hogs.

The needs of rural people can be found by comparing their situation with what it should be. Information about the situation and the ideal could be secured from such sources as an advisory council, the state departments of education and agriculture, the colleges of agriculture and education, census data, farm surveys made by teachers of vocational agriculture, and personal contacts with rural people. A good way to keep current on these needs might be through the advisory council and by means of surveys conducted by teachers of vocational agriculture.

The needs of teachers of vocational agriculture could be determined in much the same way. The ideal should be agreed upon and then means of determining what is being done by teachers will have to be devised. Another rich source of their needs is the problems that teachers recognize as being

their problems.

Tests of personality, character, intelligence, social adjustment, and health must be administered to determine the individual needs of student teachers. These should be administered as soon as possible so that remedial measures can be taken soon enough to effect a cure. Student teachers should be taught how to and encouraged to determine their own needs, to recognize their own problems.

D. Objectives

What They Are — Educational objectives are the goals we seek, the abilities we wish to develop. Educational objectives are not fixed. As progress is made toward objectives, the objectives are being altered and moved farther away. There are short-term objectives and long-term objectives. There are individual objectives and objectives of groups. Every educational ability or any activity of life has an objective, a target to be hit.

Why Have Objectives — Objectives are necessary to give direction to our actions. A program cannot exist without objectives either real or assumed. Objectives in teacher education have the purpose also of teaching, by example, the student teachers to have educational objectives.

Who Should Formulate the Objectives — The people concerned with reaching the objectives should formulate them. This includes the student teachers, as well as the cooperating teachers, university supervisors and others. Perhaps the best way to get representation of these groups in formulating the objectives is through an advisory council as described in the previous section.

Objectives of Student Teaching — There are three major objectives of student teaching, in the opinion of the writer. There are:

1. To develop the ability to test conclusions reached in the methods courses.

2. To develop sufficient skill for psychological security.
3. To develop the ability to solve new problems that arise.

The objectives of the individual student teachers will be discussed in the section on the student teaching period.

E. Evaluative Devices

What They Are — Evaluation is the other side of the coin called determining needs. Evaluation becomes the determining of the need for further education. The evaluative devices would necessarily be very similar to the devices for determining need. After the objective is decided, evidence must be agreed upon that can be used to show progress toward that objective. The next steps are finding means of collecting this evidence and weighing it properly.

Why Consider Evaluative Devices at this Point — Trying to agree upon evidence to be used in measuring progress toward an objective is one of the best ways of testing an objective. If progress toward an objective cannot be measured it must be changed. Evaluation is in terms of progress toward objectives so the time to think about how to measure this progress is immediately after the objective has been formulated. The evidence that is to be collected must be known before the learning activities start so that the evidence can be collected.

Evaluative Devices for Student Teaching — Evaluative devices for the objectives of student teaching would be evidences that could be agreed upon to use in determining progress and means for collecting this information. Using the first objective, "To develop the ability to test conclusions reached in the methods courses" as an example, the following evidence might be used to check progress toward that objective:

1. Students know what they are testing.
2. Students understand why they are testing conclusions.

3. Students have the opportunity for testing conclusions.
4. Students have the necessary skills for testing.
5. Students are given adequate supervision in testing conclusions.
6. Students satisfactorily test their conclusions.

Means for collecting the evidence required in number 1 might be to have the students to list the major abilities in which they are attempting to further their ability. This should appear in their program of student teaching. A written test and the expressed opinions of the student teachers would indicate the understandings called for in the second evidence. Evidence of opportunity for testing could be collected by comparing the facilities of the student teaching center with his major objectives. Also, the opinions of people concerned would be another way of collecting evidence of opportunity. Logs of student teachers should show evidence of opportunity for testing. Skill checks would be a way for collecting evidence on the skills of the student teachers. His past performances in similar situations, and his opinions as well as those of his teachers would be other ways of collecting evidence of skill. The number of supervisory visits and the help given during the visits could be used to collect data on the adequacy of supervision. The student's opinion if the adequacy of help could be gathered by a log of activities, anecdotes, and by opinions of those concerned. These records should include quality, as well as quantity of activity.

Space and time will not be taken here to show the possible evaluative devices for the other objectives given for student teaching.

F. Guidance

Definition of Guidance — Guidance is helping a person solve some of his problems. Guidance is a teaching situation where the counselor helps the student use the method of intelligence to resolve his difficulties. Guidance is usually

considered to mean the helping with problems of vocational choice and others of a more personal and individual nature. The method of guidance, however, is the same method as used in good teaching.

Guidance does not allow, any more than good teaching allows, telling a student what he should or should not do. The student should be helped to secure all the necessary facts and he should be guided in making the proper decision.

Students who are intellectually too immature to use the method of intelligence may have to be screened out of the program. Such instances are rare, if the teacher has the ability to counsel. However, high school students must be protected and there is justification in using force to do so, if all other methods fail.

The Need for Guidance — There is always a need for guidance, but present conditions make the problem worse. The unsettled conditions of our times make the solution of problems very difficult. The present prospects of a surplus of student teachers will greatly increase the need for guidance. Competition will be keener so the students should be guided into the fields where they have the greatest possibility for success.

The Guidance Counselor — Guidance is a teacher-pupil situation. The councelor should be a good teacher and be one that already has many facts about the student and is able to secure additional necessary information. He must be available when needed, not only when an appointment can be made.

The Method of Guidance — Guidance should be handled in the same way that other problems are handled—by the method of intelligence. The problem must be defined, the hypothesis drawn, and the facts gathered before a conclusion to be tested can be reached.

Some guidance can be done in groups and some in individual conferences. The number of people to whom the problem is common is perhaps the factor in determining the size of

the group.

All the facts gathered about the student when attempting to determine his needs should be available to the counselor. Additional information may be gathered as needed from the student or students as the case may be.

The big need in guidance is the knowledge of what it takes to be a good teacher of vocational agriculture. Research should be directed to the problem because such information would help solve many other problems of teacher education.

The Time for Guidance — The time for guidance is whenever needed. Help should be given on problems whenever the student has the problems, not afterwards. Such an attitude calls for guidance during the early part of the student's college course. Some guidance must be done even before then. Guidance about a vocation should not wait until the student has already entered into agricultural education, or after he has completed student teaching.

G. The Curriculm

Technical Agriculture — Technical agriculture is used to describe the courses in agriculture and those specifically required as requirements for agriculture courses. Although the word technical is used, the courses should not be too technical if they are to be best suited to future teachers of vocational agriculture. They must cover the entire field of agriculture that is important in the area where the student will teach vocational agriculture. The courses should be free of extraneous and unusable material to allow time for solving the problems of present day agriculture in Tennessee.

Some of the courses in technical agriculture should be taken before the student does his student teaching so that he will have security in subject matter and some should be taken afterwards to give him help on problems that arose. They should not be taken before the student has made a choice of occupation, however.

Courses in technical agriculture should be taught by people who not only know their subject and how to teach, but who also know the needs of future teachers of vocational agriculture. Courses in agriculture should be designed to meet the needs of the students and should be taught in such a way as to provide examples of excellent teaching. People generally teach as they are taught.

General Cultural Courses — The term general cultural courses is used here to describe all those courses in the curriculum other than technical agriculture and professional courses. There should be a sufficient number of them in the curriculum to give the students a general education. They should be so taught that they are functional. Students should secure usable aids from the courses that will help in living the better life.

General cultural courses for future teachers of vocational agriculture, like technical courses, should be organized to fulfill needs and should be taught in the best possible manner. These courses should be distributed throughout the four-year course and not limited to the first two years.

Professional Courses — All the courses in psychology, education, and agricultural education are included in this category. Student teaching will not be discussed at this point. A separate section will be devoted to it.

The professional courses should help students develop the abilities necessary for teaching vocational agriculture. In terms of common elements, professional courses should be taught as the students are expected to teach. They must be taught only by people who are aware of the current problems of teachers of agriculture.

Most of the professional courses should come before student teaching. Conclusions must be reached before they can be tested. There should be some time after student teaching for the student teachers to evaluate their progress and to solve the new problems that arose or to figure new solutions

to problems that were not satisfactorily solved. No lines can be drawn to divide the time for all students. There must be opportunity, however, to draw conclusions to be tested and then to restudy if the testing proved the conclusions to be faulty. Perhaps it would be best if such were going on all through the professional courses.

Extra-class Activities — All the activities in which a student participates outside of class could perhaps be considered as extra-class. For the purpose of this construct, only such activities that are sponsored by the University will be considered extra-class.

Every student should have a balanced program of extra-class activities to develop needed abilities that are not developed in class. Perhaps the better solution would be to design and teach courses in such a way that all of the abilities needed for teaching are developed in the class under the direction of the teacher.

As conditions are, extra-class activities are a vital part of the education of future teachers of vocational agriculture. The staff in agricultural education should spend the time necessary to help the students gain the most from these activities.

G. Teaching Experience

Junior Year Experiences — Prospective teachers of vocational agriculture should receive some directed experience in the work of a teacher of vocational agriculture during the junior year. Such experience will allow them to learn by doing and also provide information that will be valuable in making a choice of vocations.

Senior Year Experiences — The senior year experiences constitute a period of time if sufficient length for the student teachers to participate in the activities of teaching vocational agriculture in a selected student teaching center under the direction of competent cooperating teachers and university

supervisors. It should help them to further the development of the abilities necessary for teaching vocational agriculture.

There must be a period of time preceding the actual participating experiences for the student teachers, under the direction of university supervisors and cooperating teachers, to plan individual programs of student teaching based upon their own needs. In addition to the sessions during the student teaching period, there must be time at the end for evaluation of progress and for solving problems that are still unsolved.

Student teaching must be done in the best departments and under the direction of the best teachers of vocational agriculture. In addition, the department and the teacher must be capable of doing the job of teacher education. Student teaching should be done in a community similar to the one to which the student teacher will likely go as a teacher.

Internship — Internship is taken to mean teaching experience that is provided under guidance on the graduate level. There is much merit in such experiences. A sound internship program must be based upon a sound program of participatory experiences during the undergraduate years. Interships should not be established in agricultural education at the University of Tennessee until the undergraduate program has been much improved.

H. Physical Facilities

Needs — The needs for physical facilities are greater for student teaching than they are for other courses. In addition to having available a class room, library facilities, and other requirements of regular courses, student teaching requires student teaching centers and transportation for staff and students.

There should be enough student teaching centers available so there would be one for about every two students each quarter. In some cases, one center to three or four students

would be sufficient, but in most centers in Tennessee, two student teachers to a center is about right.

Transportation must be provided the university supervisors to make their visits. This must be handled either by university cars or by paying mileage for the use of the supervisor's private car. If the budget will allow, students should be provided transportation to and from the department when making their initial visit to the student teaching center and when moving to and from the community for student teaching. Visits within the community to supervise farming programs should be considered as official mileage and be reimbursed from vocational funds.

I. Supervision

What Supervision Is — Supervision is good teaching. The place may not be the classroom and the group may be small or even may be only the teacher and one student, but the use of the best teaching methods are never more necessary. Many consider supervision as policing or inspection, hence the name "snoopervision". The student should be led to recognize his problems and then aided in finding solutions to them.

Who Should Supervise — The student teachers should be supervised by the cooperating teachers, by university supervisors, and by other student teachers. When supervision is considered a learning situation, anyone that is familiar with conditions should have a contribution to make. Student teachers will have to supervise themselves as teachers and also supervise assistant teachers, so every opportunity should be given them to learn how to supervise.

When Supervision Should be Given — Supervision should be given whenever needed. The cooperating teacher need not be present at all activities of the student teachers, but he should always be available if needed. The university supervisor should, in so far as possible, be on call to give help when needed. Available staff usually will not allow this flexibility, however. At least one visit per week while the

students are in the teaching centers should be the minimum.

The Method of Supervision — The method of supervision is the same as the method of good teaching. Observation must be relied upon to secure many of the necessary facts. This observation must be accurate and limited to the important points. Some means should be divised for recording these observations so they will be available when needed.

Care must be taken to keep supervision a teaching situation. It must not be policing and the student must not feel that it is.

J. Records and Reports

Records — All information that is gathered about the student should be on file and available to the guidance person, the supervisors, the cooperating teachers, and other members of the staff in agricultural education. This information should be summarized and filed so that it is readily usable. Some of the information should be made availible to the placement officers, also.

Reports — Reports of student teaching should be sent to the Deans of the Colleges of Education and Agriculture and also to the State Supervisor of Agricultural Education. These reports should be a part of the annual report on teacher education in agricultural education. They should include such statistics as the number of student teachers, the centers used, cost of the program and the major activities of the student teachers.

K. Evaluation

What Evaluation Should Be — Evaluation should be a learning situation in which the progress made is determined and the need for further education is pointed out. Evaluation is the tallying up of the score to see how things stand. Evaluation goes on all the time even though there may be definite periods set aside for evaluation.

Evaluation Is Necessary — Evaluation is necessary to maintain interest in a project and to pursue a course with any degree of intelligence. If there is no evaluation, the venture is poor and soon deteriorates.

Who Should Evaluate — Everyone concerned should participate in the evaluation. This includes student teachers, cooperating teachers, high school students, university staff, and others. The participation in the evaluation of the progress of individual student teachers would be limited to those familiar with their objectives and activities. The evaluation of the program of student teaching as a whole should perhaps be done by the advisory group, in cooperation with the staff in agricultural education.

The Method of Evaluation — Evaluation should be a weighing of the evidence that has been collected. It should remain a learning situation and not become a period for criticizing mistakes made. Evaluation, in the end, is self-evaluation, so the person or groups being evaluated must agree to the evidence that is being used and to the final conclusions if evaluation is to be effective. Evaluation should teach the participants how to evaluate their own as well as the progress of others.

VITA

Bonard Scott Wilson was born on March 5, 1919, in Wabash County, Illinois. He attended elementary and high schools in the County and entered the University of Illinois in 1936. He received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Agriculture, with honors, in June, 1940. He taught vocational agriculture at Noble, Illinois, from then until he enlisted in the United States Army Air Corps in June, 1942.

He entered the Graduate School of the University of Illinois in February, 1946, receiving the Master of Arts Degree in October of that year and the Master of Education in October of 1947. On September 1, 1947, he was employed by the University of Tennessee as an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education. On September 1, 1949, he was made Acting Head of the Department of Agricultural Education, the position he now holds.

He is the author of "Guidance of Student Teachers", *Agricultural Education Magazine,* November, 1948 and edited *Aids in Planning Farm Enterprises,* Agricultural Education Office, University of Illinois.